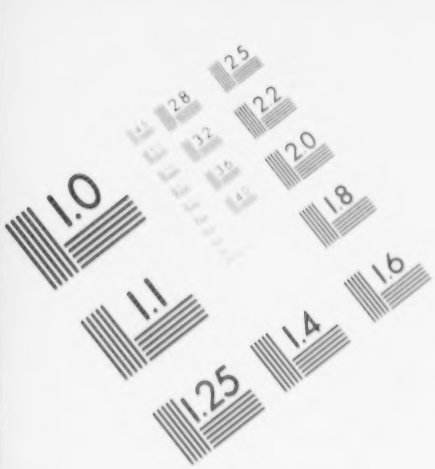

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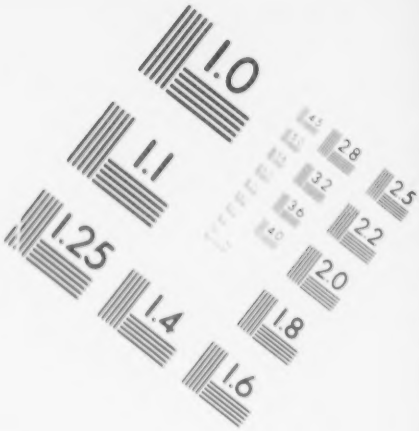

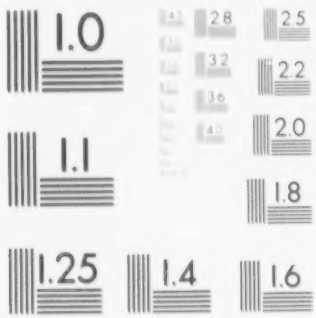

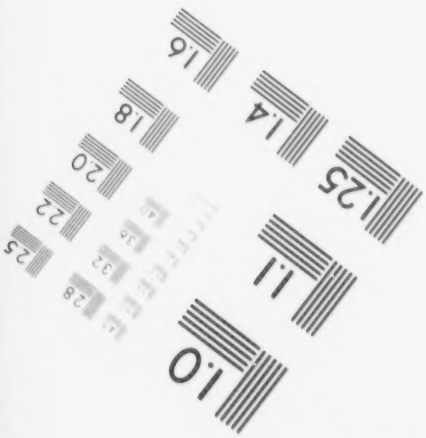

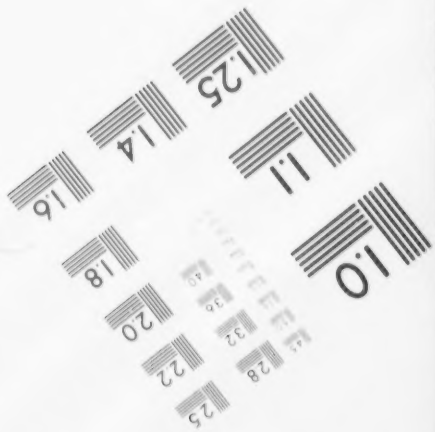

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ABSTRACT

This summary report addresses the fundamental objectives of higher education in the Netherlands and proposes structural reforms to help make higher education more effective. Part 1 outlines the focus of the report, while Part 2 reviews the tasks and functions of higher education in the Netherlands from a historical perspective. Part 3 examines the changing nature of higher education, focusing on the move from an elite to a mass system of higher education since the 1950s. Part 4 postulates that, due to this "massification" of higher education, fundamental structural reforms need to be implemented. Part 5 presents five principles for the reform of the higher education system, including institutional differentiation and the phased realization of objectives, academic and professional training, convergent curriculum development, intensification of education, and separation of accountabilities. Part 6 outlines plans for higher education reorganization. This scenario would provide for a clear separation between the initial stage of academic education and a second stage of professional or academic vocational education on the one hand and scientific research training on the other. A six-page summary in French in provided. An appendix contains a chart of the existing Dutch education system. Contains additional publications by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy: a 47-item list of Reports to the Government and a 110-item list of preliminary and background studies (a few available in English, most in Dutch). (MDM)

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Reports to the Government

Higher Education in Stages

47

1995

Summary of the
47th Report to the Government

The Hague, 1995

WE 028 635

Netherlands Scientific Council
for Government Policy

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Introduction

The organisation and funding of higher education have recently generated a good deal of discussion in the Netherlands. The standard of higher education has been the subject of debate for some time. There appear to be as many opinions as there are participants in the debate. This stems from the ambiguity about the tasks and functions of such education. The aim of the Council's report Higher Education in Stages is, accordingly, to bring the debate back to fundamentals, namely defining the objectives of higher education appropriate to the changing national and international context. This English summary deals with the most important elements of the Council's report.

The report was prepared by an internal WRR project group chaired by Prof. Hans P.M. Adriaansens, a member of the Council. The secretary of the project was Dr. Gerrit J. Kronjee. The other members of the project group were Dr. Krijn W.H. van Beek, Dr. Cornelius A. Hazeu and Dr. Frans J.P.M. Hoefnagel.

Problem addressed by this report

1

Particularly since the early 1980s, the standard of education has been a major source of concern in higher education policy. This does not just apply to the Netherlands; a number of countries in the European Union have established educational standards, review and/or accreditation systems that underline the importance attached to the standard of higher education and university research. The growing interest in monitoring the standard of education reflects a certain confusion within the Netherlands about the meaning of this concept. In assessing the results of higher education it is therefore possible to arrive at highly divergent conclusions. Employers, politicians and other opinion-leaders claim that the quality of higher education is under pressure. This is said to apply particularly to university education; higher vocational education comes in for a good deal less criticism. The criticism of university education is, however, also refuted, on the grounds that major improvements have taken place in recent decades in both education and research.

If the debate about higher education leads to such diametrically opposed conclusions, this can only mean that the criteria on the basis of which the facts are established and judgements are reached must vary widely. These criteria relate first and foremost to the goals of higher education. A proper judgement about the standard of higher education can only be reached if there is clarity about the goals and if this enjoys consensus.

Definition of the problem

As a result of changes in the social context, the objectives of higher education may have lost clarity and consistency, or even suffer from certain internal contradictions. This calls for the reformulation or, if necessary, modification of the objectives. Such a redefinition is the first task undertaken by the Council in this report. The second task is more organisational and/or administrative in nature, namely the specification of development principles that can serve as a guideline in improving the present system.

The definition of the problem may be formulated as follows:
- *How should the goals of higher education as enshrined in the legislation be adapted in line with changing circumstances so as to create a clear and attractive framework for the educational institutions concerned, while at the same time establishing the conditions for both an effective and an efficient system of higher education in the longer term?*
- *On the basis of which development principles can the present system of higher education be made both effective and efficient in the longer term?*

Tasks and functions of higher education in historical perspective

2

The Dutch system of higher education comprises two broad categories of institutions, namely universities and colleges of higher vocational education or *hogescholen*. The two categories of institutions which together make up the 'system' have entirely different histories. Higher vocational education has had a formal, statutory basis only since 1986, whereas the oldest Dutch universities were established just after the Reformation. As with universities all over the world, the Dutch universities were originally a form of 'higher' vocational education. In most cases the universities arose out of faculties of theology that were intended for the training of ministers of religion. This did not just apply to the Netherlands but also to other countries in Europe, as well as to the older American universities.

The 19th century: from vocational education to Bildung by the pursuit of science

In the early 19th century the Dutch university provided vocational education for the higher classes. At that time higher education in the Netherlands was organised along French lines. Article 1 of a Royal Decree of 1815, which shaped the system of higher education over many years, defined the task of higher education as follows: 'By higher education is understood such education as is aimed at preparing the student, upon completion of primary and secondary education, for the scholarly classes in society'. 'Scholars' should not be interpreted in the modern sense of the word but as notables such as ministers of religion, doctors, teachers at Latin schools and lawyers.

Apart from this scholarly class there also arose at that time an 'educated class', which acquired practical and technical skills, for example for trade and industry, in non-university courses of education. Such education was, however, a matter of private initiative. The Secondary Education Act, under which primary and secondary schools, agricultural colleges and polytechnics were encouraged, was not introduced until 1863. Such education was intended for the middle classes and occupied an intermediate position between the education for the scholarly class and the primary and advanced primary schooling that was regarded as public education.

University education in the Netherlands remained primarily a form of vocational education until well into the 19th century. It was firmly entrenched in the class system of the time and thus chiefly intended for the upper middle class and the higher professions. In the course of the 19th century, however, the advancement of science was increasingly viewed as an important social function of higher education. That function was explicitly laid down in the Higher Education Act of 1876. According to this initial piece of legislation on higher education in the Netherlands, higher education was concerned with training and preparation for independent scientific endeavour and positions in society for which an academic training was required.

Following the example of higher education in Germany, the Dutch universities became Humboldt institutes. The *Bildung* or general education to which the contact with science was designed to give rise became increasingly central. The direct social contribution of higher education - i.e. the provision of academically trained professionals - was increasingly replaced in practice by the aim of scientific development, from which social progress would in due course stand to benefit even more. At the same time, however, this meant that

the education became designed for a select group of students. This also had the consequence that new courses of education in technical areas and vocational education were excluded, in that such education would disturb the unity of science, which was regarded as the ideal. Technical specialisations were therefore excluded from the realm of the universities. This subsequently resulted in the separate establishment of technical colleges of higher education and later also in the development of a separate system of higher vocational education.

Reform and continuity after the Second World War

Although the Higher Education Act of 1876 was amended over the course of time, it was not replaced by a new act on university education until 1960. The introduction of this act was preceded by a good deal of debate that appeared to point in the direction of reform. In practice, however, the emphasis on the scientific development function of the university and the associated education system was strengthened.

According to Section 1 of the University Education Act of 1960, university education is aimed at education for the independent pursuit of science; preparation for positions in society for which a scientific education may be required or useful; and promotion of insight into the cohesion of science. The sequence of these tasks was a deliberate one and indicated the order of importance. What was new was that university education was designed to promote insight into the coherence of the sciences. In addition the universities were given the statutory assignment under Section 2 of the pursuit of science and promotion of a sense of social responsibility.

The serious implementation of these assignments was rendered all but impossible by the rapid growth and specialisation of academic research, including that outside the system of higher education. In the process, the gap between the forefront of academic research and the much more general content of the education required by way of preparation for the labour market steadily widened. It accordingly became increasingly problematical to provide a growing group of students with at once a specialised academic research education and a preparation for a career outside the academic world. These two assignments cut across one another. For this reason numerous suggestions for adapting the system were made, particularly after the Second World War, but ultimately not much changed. The recommendations were not followed up, higher education policy struck down a different path and the system remained intact. The resulting tensions between objectives, organisation and social requirements had to be resolved by means of the greater efficiency of higher education. In addition the system of higher vocational education had to cope with greater numbers of students.

The *hogescholen* evolved into institutes for higher education because of the need to provide vocational training that was consistent with the higher level of general education being attained by a growing numbers of students at secondary level. The *hogescholen* were also needed because of the higher standards being demanded in the labour market. The merging of smaller higher vocational (HBO) institutes during the 1980s to create the present *hogescholen* resulted in huge organisations. The relationship between these large institutions and the universities has been a controversial one ever since. On this score higher education policy has repeatedly shifted ground between a desire for integration and a clearer distinction between higher vocational education and university education. The place of vocational training in relation to university education is therefore ambiguous.

Nevertheless the most recent legislative development was the Higher Education and University Research Act (WHW) in which, despite the debate

about and criticism of higher education, the latter was not adapted in line with the changes in the social context. Under the WHW, university education retains its 19th century Humboldt orientation.

The Higher Education and University Research Act (WHW) of 1993 creates a single statutory regime for the *hogescholen* and universities, but also maintains a distinction in the objectives of the two kinds of institutions. According to the Act, the universities are charged with the provision of academic education and with conducting scientific research. In all cases they provide initial degree programmes, conduct scientific research, educate people as scientific researchers or technological designers and contribute knowledge towards society. University education is aimed at a preparation for the independent pursuit of science or the professional application of scientific knowledge. In addition university education is designed to promote insight into the cohesion of the sciences. First degree education is higher education that links up with the second stage of secondary education.

Under the WHW, *hogescholen* are concerned with the provision of higher vocational education. The latter is education aimed at the transfer of theoretical knowledge and the development of skills in close coordination with the labour market. Hogescholen are permitted to conduct research in so far as this is related to the education provided at the institution. In all cases they will provide initial degree programmes and contribute knowledge towards society. They will also contribute to the development of professions at which the education is aimed.

The terms of reference of the Open University are to provide academic education and higher vocational education. In all cases it will provide initial degree programmes, in the form of distance education.

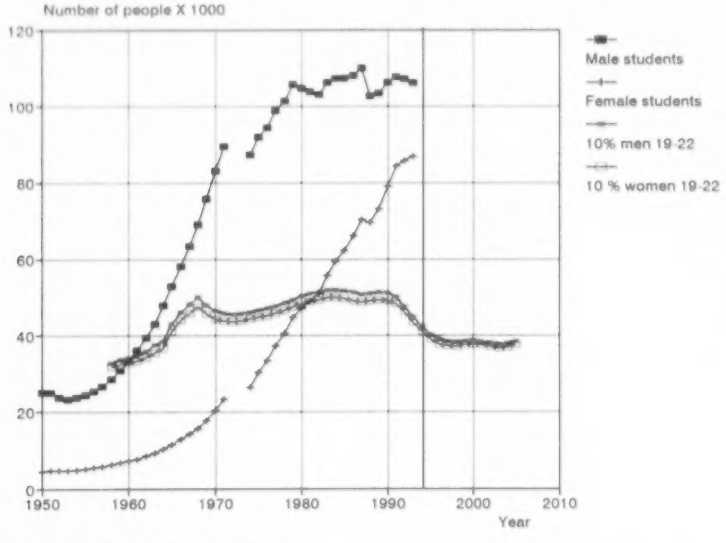
Under the Act, the universities, *hogescholen* and the Open University are also required to devote attention to personal development and promoting a sense of social responsibility. In the case of education for Dutch-speaking students they are also required to enhance their ability to express themselves in Dutch.

The changed social context 3

Higher education: from elite to mass

'Massification', or the development of higher education from elite into mass education, is a consistent element in the debate about the system of higher education in the Netherlands. By any measure, the higher education intake has risen greatly since the 1950. The growth in participation has changed both the face and the prestige of higher education. As a result of the larger number of students and the growing diversity of their previous education, universities and *hogescholen* are dealing to a greater extent than ever before with differences in the capacities and interests of students in their first year. The required differentiation of education has not come about sufficiently.

Figure 3.1 **Students in university education and population aged 19-22, 1950-1993**



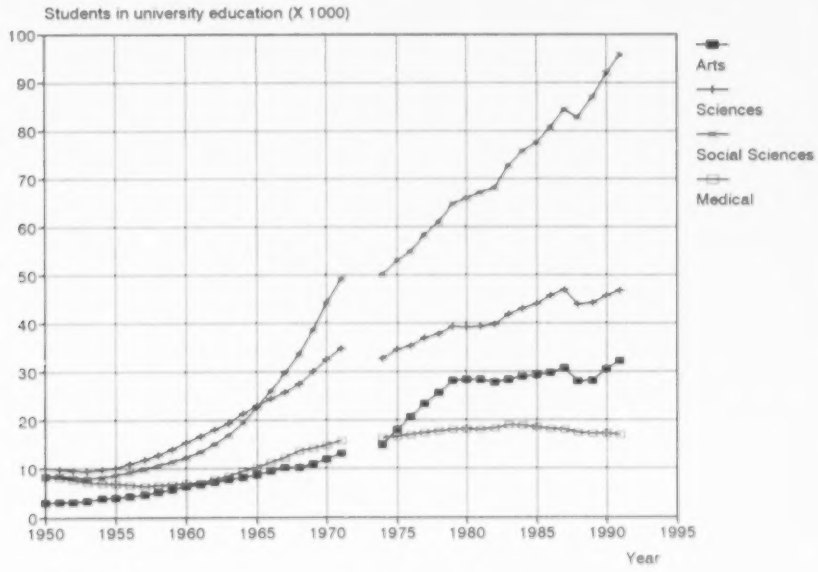
Source: CBS; after 1993: WRR

The structure of the system also changed in response to the enormous growth in student numbers. Institutions of higher education grew in size and new ones came into being. The number of courses of study expanded greatly and the number of staff in higher education also grew sharply. Staff numbers grew steadily in line with student numbers in both higher vocational and university education. The number of students per full-time equivalent of teaching staff in higher education has held surprisingly steady over time. In higher vocational education there have been consistently around 16 students per full time teacher. In university education the number of students over time has remained at approximately eight per full-time equivalent university staff. An important factor in this respect is that university staff generally spend half their time on research and half on teaching.

Education in the labour market

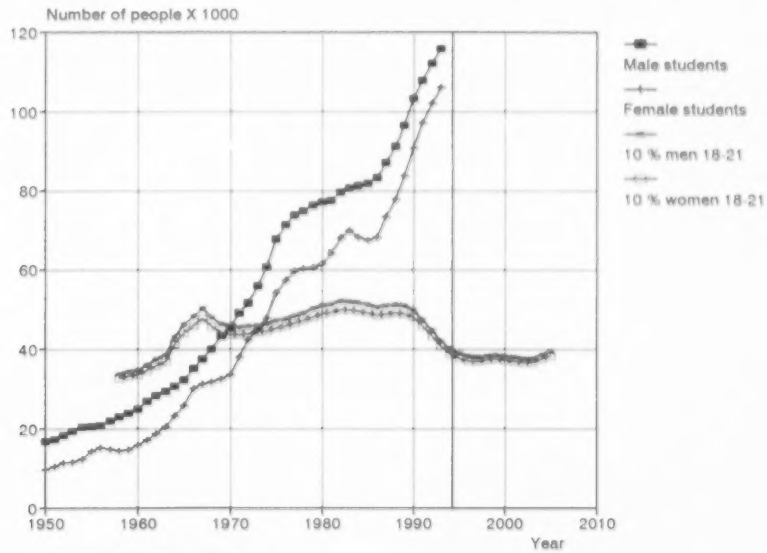
Over the past few decades the labour market for higher education graduates has undergone spectacular change. The number of university and higher vocational education graduates has risen sharply in both a relative and an absolute sense. Until the late 1970s the demand for and supply of tertiary gradu-

Figure 3.2 **Development in number of students in university education by sector, 1950-1991**



Source: CBS

Figure 3.3 **Students in higher vocational education (1950-1993) and population aged 18-21 (1958-2005)**



Source: CBS, after 1993: WRR

ates was reasonably in balance. The recessions in the early 1980s and early 1990s, however, clearly revealed that graduates can run into the same kinds of labour market problems that were encountered by other groups of employees at an earlier stage. Unemployment or a job that does not really use the educational skills in question also became a problem that graduates had to take into account.

The developments in the labour market have set in motion two mechanisms with relation to higher education that would appear at variance with what is desirable. In the first place a trend arose to tailor the courses of education at the *hogescholen* and universities to specific jobs and functions. The result was a proliferation in courses of study. This trend does not, however, appear to have improved the labour market prospects for graduates in the somewhat longer term. In a static world, the increased job-specificity would undoubtedly have borne fruit. Occupations and functions are, however, developing and changing at a an increasing rather than decreasing pace; a career choice for life appears largely a thing of the past. Many tertiary graduates obtain jobs upon graduation in areas other than that in which they specialised. In addition graduates' careers are increasingly characterised by regular changes of employer, functions, occupation and discipline - a development that is likely to be intensified in the future.

This immediately raises the problem of coordination with the labour market: courses of higher education directed solely towards a specific occupation or function find themselves confronted with a labour market in which the educational specificity of occupations is shrinking visibly. The higher education of the future will therefore need to concentrate on providing a solid basis to see students, in combination with further training at a later stage, through their entire careers. Graduates must therefore emerge from their education with intellectual mobility and be able to hold down various jobs in the course of their lives. Furthermore, possession of a degree no longer means that one can automatically walk into a job at senior level. The average level of education in society has arisen, and people often complete higher education at 22 or 23, considerably earlier than before.

The second mechanism that is a direct result of developments in the labour market for graduates concerns the growing doubts about the utility of 'mass higher education' as an objective of government policy and hence also about large-scale public investment in higher education. Labour market research in recent years has led to the conclusion that graduates sometimes end up in jobs below their educational qualifications, thereby taking jobs from those with less education. Whether these observations are correct or not, they do not justify doubts about the utility of mass higher education. The fact that graduates may at any one point be holding down jobs not commensurate with their level of education does not mean that they will remain permanently at to low a level. In principle higher education creates the opportunity of 'growing on'. Nor can it be concluded that society as a whole would be better off if the graduate in question had received less education; individual career patterns have not been sufficiently identified to draw conclusions on this score. Finally, one cannot really speak of over-investment in higher education: research indicates that the return on investment in higher education remains decidedly positive, both for society and in general and for the individual concerned. In this regard it should be noted that we are concerned here purely with the financial return; if account were also to be taken of the intangible benefits of investments in higher education the 'return' would be even higher. Seen in this light there is no justification in labour-market terms for reducing the volume of investment in higher education, for example by limiting the intake at universities and *hogescholen*.

Technical and scientific disciplines occupy a special place in the debate about the relationship between higher education and the labour market. Technological innovation is, with justification, generally regarded as one of the most important factors behind the rise in prosperity in a general sense. The technological innovation potential should not, however, be confused with the number of graduates in technical and scientific disciplines. Contrary to popular opinion there would appear little reason for concern about long-term

shortages of technologists in the labour market. Such problems as there are relate more to the standard of the education, especially university degrees. The position of the Netherlands in a technological sense can be improved by greater coordination between government policies to promote technology and education policy and by improved cooperation between the education system and the labour market.

The changing international context

The European Union (EU) is a background factor that helps shape the Dutch system of higher education. The EU affects the system of higher education in a totally different way from the national government. Whereas the classic, national governmental responsibilities relate in particular to the immediate protection, funding, organisation and harmonisation of higher education, the main concern at European level is to regulate the playing fields in which the institutions are required to operate.

On the one hand this playing field is being widened by the freedom of movement of people and services, by the limitations imposed on the monopoly positions of national, publicly funded educational institutions and by better opportunities for transnational cooperation within education and between education and industry. A combination of competition and cooperation is therefore encouraged at institutional level. On the other hand the EU is more concerned than classic domestic policy with ensuring that higher education institutions take into account of the social environment in which they operate, especially the professional and vocational qualifications laid down at European level by industry and professional organisations. In addition this new playing field is reflected in the support provided at European level for a private education sector and for transnational distance and open education. The EU not only promotes the formation of transfrontier networks, both within education and with industry, but is also increasingly entering into direct administrative and financial relationships with these international joint ventures. Formally, the member states retain a large measure of freedom in the field of education, but, on account of all these factors, a purely domestic policy for higher education has become steadily less possible and also desirable.

The EU is therefore encouraging new patterns of convergence and divergence at institutional level. A decline in national policies aimed at standardisation does not mean broad replacement by a policy of standardisation laid down by a 'higher' European government. The US example makes it clear that convergence and divergence can coexist. A high degree of uniformity in terms of a number of external features of courses of study, such as a common classification and uniform system of credits, provides room for a wider diversity of functions and levels of training courses and institutions. Convergence need not therefore be synonymous with forcing into line, but can also mean that diversity becomes compatible and therefore manageable.

Relationship between government and institutions

Shifts in the appreciation of the place and role of the public sector have imposed new demands on the way in which educational institutions are organised.

In this respect the organisation of the higher vocational institutions would appear more modern and responsive to changes in society than that of the universities. Despite the process of democratisation in the 1960s and 1970s, the academic profession - however diversified it may be - has developed into its own 'referee'. This is conducive to rigidity. Permanent efforts to maintain standards within the system call for independence and autonomy on the part of administrators, as well as for clear and stable sets of goals within which to

operate. That philosophy, which is gaining increasing currency in society in general, inevitably has implications for both the relationship between the government and educational institutions and for the internal arrangements within those institutions.
This is conducive to rigidity and to the isolation of higher education from the demand of society. Permanent efforts to maintain standards within the system call for independence and autonomy on the part of lecturers and researchers, as well as for clear and stable sets of goals within which to operate. That philosophy, which is gaining increasing currency in society in general, inevitably has implications for both the relationship between the government and educational institutions and for the internal arrangements within those institutions.

Conclusions

After the Second World War a system arose of 'mass higher education'. This imposed new demands in terms of both volume and standards; not only was the system required to gear itself to a larger number of students, but those larger numbers made for an extremely diversified student population, for which new forms of differentiation in educational provision was required. The latter has, however, not been satisfactorily achieved.

The coordination of higher education with the labour market also demanded, and demands, improvement. The institutions of education have in many cases responded to the challenges posed by the labour market by the provision of training courses oriented increasingly towards specific occupations and functions, while at the same time attempting to provide an academic education. This caused problems in terms of coordination with the labour market. By means of the free movement of services and people, European unification has become one of the main influences shaping the system of higher education in the Netherlands. This provides another reason for improving the coordination between higher education and the labour market in the Netherlands.

On the basis of the changes in the social context outlined above, changes are required to the system of higher education. Improvements in higher education can be effected without detriment to the independence and autonomy of professionals, working in higher education. The government does, however, need to formulate clear and stable sets of goals within which to operate.

Reformulation of the goals 4

Objectives of university education

In the light of the package of requirements that the universities are required to meet, the Council considers that the universities' statutory objectives need to be reformulated. In principle three related objectives for university education may be distinguished. These are:

1. Academic education: the cultivation of transferable and academic skills with a view to active participation in society.
2. Preparation for specific professions for which transferable and academic skills are required.
3. Preparation for specific academic occupations such as lecturers and researchers.

Each of these three objectives represents a separate, specific interest and therefore also merits separate attention. All three of the objectives concern the preparation of young people to play their part in a rapidly changing, complex and knowledge-intensive society. It is, however, difficult for these objectives to be pursued simultaneously within the one, undifferentiated organisation. The first of the objectives applies generally to university students, while the latter two apply just to some. The objectives are discussed in more detail below.

The most general objective is that of 'the cultivation of transferable and academic skills with a view to active participation in society'. This objective may be general in nature but has become increasingly important for higher education on account of developments in the national and international labour market, the intensification of know-how in production and the internationalisation of society. Graduates need to have a basic understanding of the complexity of modern society, its historical and cultural background, its international position and special features and the most important ways in which societies is evolving. It is also important for them to be familiar with the place and use of academic knowledge in society and for them to have mastered academic skills and methods.

A successful academic education is not limited to these reflexive elements: on the basis of their knowledge and understanding, graduates must also be equipped to accept responsibility, take initiatives and provide direction; they must also be able to set structures for themselves and for others, in both an overall social context and specific occupational concepts. Graduates should also have the ability to operate outside the limits of their own country, language and culture.

Finally, an important element forming part of this first objective for university education is that academic functioning must always be tied to a social context for which the education must, at least, provide a preparation. A graduate must be able to project onto and combine around a specific sector of society and must therefore be conversant with that sector. Whether we are dealing with the economy, health care, government policy, law, the environment, technology or education, graduates must be capable of transferring their academic skills in the field in question to the world of work. This means that an academic education will always be linked to some kind of disciplinary specialisation; academic education without such specialisation is not sustainable, but requires a discipline as its point of reference. This does not however mean that mastery of a particular discipline automatically equates with academic education; on the contrary: the greater the pressure for specialisation, the greater the temptation to approach reality in terms of the speciali-

sation instead of regarding that specialisation as a special case of a wider reality.

The second objective for university education is more specific in nature, namely that universities are required to prepare some of the students for *specific* occupations requiring analytical and transferable skills. The emphasis here is on specialised professions rather than more general functions. We are concerned here with traditional and new professions that can only be filled in close contact with and on the basis of specially designed academic or vocational courses: doctors, lawyers, engineers as well as teachers, psychotherapists and business administrators. These occupations differ from more general positions in the labour market filled by graduates in that their content is more specialised, the required training period is longer and the necessary knowledge is so bound up with scholarship and the advancement of science that it cannot be picked up in practice alone.

The third objective concerns the same level of specificity, but relates particularly to scholarship and the advancement of science. Universities are required to prepare a proportion of their students for specialised academic positions such as that of lecturer and researcher. Examples include jobs concerned with the organisation and transfer of scientific knowledge, including both transfer to other social sectors and university education itself. Also included are jobs requiring a proper overview of the state of a given area of scientific endeavour. When it comes to the organisation of scientific research and the provision of higher education, many positions can only be adequately filled by graduates with some experience in independent scientific research. They must have a broad overview of one or more areas of science and need to be familiar with developments at the cutting edge of research. This applies a fortiori to training as a scientific researcher, i.e. jobs in which research is conducted on a disciplinary or multi-disciplinary basis for the advancement of science, development of products or policy support purposes. Scientific researchers are employed at universities, in technological institutes, in research, planning and consultancy bureaus and in the R&D departments of (generally large) industrial companies.

It would appear difficult to realize these wide-ranging objectives of university education simultaneously within the existing organisational structure. The length of study is too brief and the student population too heterogeneous. In particular, the first objective - academic training - is coming under pressure in the present structure of university education. Furthermore it is difficult to meet objectives 2 and 3 if objective 1 has not been fulfilled.

Objectives of higher vocational education

Three objectives may be distinguished with respect to higher vocational education:

1. The acquisition of theoretical knowledge in a given discipline.
2. Learning to apply that knowledge in a particular profession.
3. Achieving a professional level of work and thought by means of personal, social and general education.

These objectives form a logical extension of one another, and can therefore readily be achieved within a single, undifferentiated organisation. The lack of any double mission - in contrast to universities, *hogescholen* are not required to be research centres - also permits a sharper focus. Objective 3 refers to the formation of personal and social skills required for carrying out higher professions. The interaction between practice and theory so characteristic of higher vocational education provides a firm foundation for this.

Generally speaking higher vocational education in the Netherlands has a good reputation. In a comparatively short space of time, higher vocational education has managed to establish an important position for itself in the Dutch system of education as an independent variant of higher education and is generally spared many of the criticisms levelled at university education at political level and within society. If, therefore, the focus in this report is primarily on university education, this does not imply any bias in favour of such organisations but reflects the conviction that the organisational structure and objectives are more effectively harmonised in the case of higher vocational education than they are in university education.

Conclusions

The objectives of higher vocational education (i.e. the transfer of theoretical knowledge, learning to apply knowledge, and training for a profession) form a logical extension of one another and can be effectively achieved within the existing structure. In the case of university education a different conclusion needs to be drawn: the present organisation of such education results in an unsatisfactory compromise between the various objectives. Academic development, preparation for the professions and the training of academic staff cannot readily be achieved simultaneously within the existing structure and the time available and with a disparate group of students.

Development principles 5

The recognition that the structure of the present system of higher education is no longer consistent in various respects with the context in which it is required to operate also leads to the insight that an excessively detailed blueprint for the future system of higher education can generate new frictions. Instead step by step changes are required which, over a period of years, can transform the system. It is for this reason that the Council attaches particular importance in its recommendations to the principles for systemic reform that arise logically from the above analysis. These principles should be regarded as guidelines for the numerous minor adjustments paving the way for an improvement in standards. The Council notes five such principles.

1. Institutional differentiation and the phased realisation of objectives.
2. Academic and professional training.
3. Convergent curriculum development.
4. Intensification of education.
5. Separation of accountabilities.

These five principles are discussed in brief below.

1. *Institutional differentiation and the phased realisation of objectives in higher education*

The existing distinction in the Netherlands between two variants of higher education (namely university education and higher vocational education) needs to be supplemented by a form of temporary differentiation or phasing within university education on the basis of the objectives it is required to meet.

The most basic objective of university higher education is to cultivate transferable and academic skills with a view to active participation in the knowledge-intensive society. This objective calls for a first stage of higher education to prepare students either for a wide range of general academic functions or for follow-up training for research or a profession. This first stage of university higher education is therefore the main time at which this first objective is promoted. A diversity of disciplinary and thematic training opportunities must be offered during this stage, so that the attainment of transferable and academic skills can consistently be attached to a specific educational stream.

The first stage of university education is less suited to preparation for a specific profession in a knowledge-intensive society, whether this be a profession or university research. Follow-up in the form of a degree (*doctoraal*) programme in the second stage of a university education is the suitable vehicle for this purpose.

2. *Academic development in university education and professional training in higher vocational education*

The second principle that needs to be taken into account in revising the system of higher education relates first and foremost to the consistent provision of a place for *academic development* in Dutch university education. In order to prevent both specific research training and the specialised university occupational training from by-passing the academic tradition, the academic nature of education and development needs to be emphasized in the first stage of university education. The importance of a more academic orientation as a background for either a university career or the professions can no longer be disregarded. If this principle is put into practice it will also have the advantage

that a meaningful distinction can be drawn between higher vocational education and the first stage of university education.

Broadening, in the sense of the ability to transcend the boundaries of a particular profession and to develop affinity for other occupations by the transfer of knowledge, also plays a major role in the *professional training* element of higher vocational education. Graduates of the higher vocational education system are also finding that occupational, territorial and linguistic boundaries are affording ever less protection. Higher vocational education will need to take account of this fact.

Like the upbringing of a child, development - and hence also academic development - is not easily organised: the fact is that attitudes are not readily transmitted by means of courses and modules. More important is the example set by teachers, their enthusiasm for their particular subject, their attitudes in a wider social context, involvement with students, efforts to involve students actively in the subject matter and so on.

3. *Convergent curriculum development*

As far as higher education as a whole is concerned, it would be desirable for the system of degree programmes to take the form of a limited number of 'intake profiles' and/or common foundation (*propaedeuse*) courses. This would also make it more possible to counsel students during their courses on their choice of major subject or pre-specialisation. It would also make it possible where appropriate to refer university students to more specialised courses in higher vocational education, or conversely to advise students in the latter system to switch to the foundation course or *propaedeuse* at a university. This would mean that course selection no longer took place at a point when the relevant information was lacking. It would also mean that life could be breathed into the dead letter of the statutory function of the foundation course with respect to orientation, selection and referral.

Initiatives are in fact being taken within higher vocational education to broaden the curriculum at the start of the course. This is being done in response to the desirability of broadening the common base of the various kinds of vocational education in the interests of greater labour force mobility.

4. *Intensification of education*

A broadening of intake profiles would permit the intensification of education and prevent the present practice whereby lectures are given to hundreds of students at once in certain subjects for which only limited numbers of teachers are available. Large numbers could then be broken down into smaller groups. It would also mean that courses for which there was a high level of interest in the first stage could be given in parallel by several lecturers. This would demand a considerable degree of standardisation as well as the confidence that individual teachers would still be able to generate their own motivation in a standardised curriculum and to instil enthusiasm in their students.

The intensification of education would mean that students and teaching staff spent a significant proportion of the working week together. This could take the form of lectures, working groups, practicals, assignment reviews, paper and dissertation discussions, etc. Students in full-time education would need to spend at least 15 to 20 hours a week in some form of structured education; the remaining time would be available for familiarisation with the subject matter, carrying out practical assignments and writing papers. This is already generally the case in the sciences, medicine and engineering, where

there is a marked emphasis on practical work. In the arts and social sciences, by contrast, the relationship between actual contact hours and the time for personal study is generally so skewed that it comes as little surprise that many students use the time for personal study for other purposes.

For preference, teaching staff should be available full-time during the semesters or terms in which they are required to provide tuition. Outside the semesters or terms they would be free to undertake research. Teaching staff should also be attached to a particular group of students for a reasonable length of time (at least one semester) and, certainly in faculties with large student numbers, it would be worth considering the introduction of a tutor system.

The intensification of education would also provide greater opportunities for serious selection, referral and remedial work and would also allow the hidden talents of students to come to the surface, for which intensive contact between student and teacher is indispensable. Under such a system the referral of students by means of a binding recommendation regarding the continuation of studies would become both possible and meaningful; in the absence of intensive contact, a binding recommendation lacks any real legitimacy.

5. *Separation of accountabilities within higher education*

Deciding which training courses are to be provided, how education elements are to be fitted into curricula, how the curricula in question must be structured and how various disciplines can contribute towards curricula is a substantive administrative matter. Although curriculum-development or departmental committees are provided for under the law as separate entities, they tend at present to form an extension of the specialist departments and to lack independent authority.

It would therefore be desirable for universities to have a single curriculum-development committee or board of studies. This would need to be a standing committee acting as an umbrella for the various departmental committees already provided for under the law. The functional division of professional responsibilities on the one hand and substantive administrative responsibilities on the other would provide numerous opportunities for improving the quality of the primary tasks in universities. In fact, a 'market' could in this way be created in which the tone was no longer set by the suppliers of education (i.e. the departments) but in which the curriculum-development body acts as the source of demand. Under this arrangement the curriculum-development committee would ask a particular department whether it was able to provide a specific course within a previously determined curriculum to a particular standard, and the department in question would then submit a bid. If the course were then included in the curriculum, the department would receive the necessary funding.

The profession would then cease to be its own referee; the all too noticeable consequences of a supply-side philosophy would immediately disappear from the various curricula. The curriculum-development body would also be the organisation responsible for assessing the quality of the education supplied and for attaching consequences to such evaluation. The course in question could for example be dropped from the curriculum, the relevant department could be asked to improve the standard of teaching or the course could be transferred to a different department.

The future of higher education: the WRR scenario

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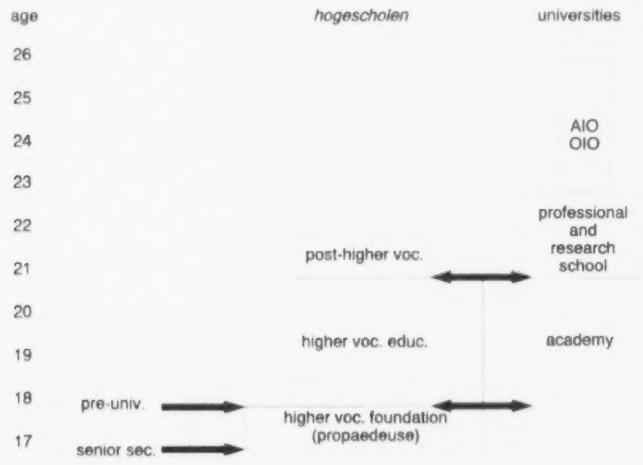
According to the Council, the principles outlined above should guide the development of education in the Netherlands. On the basis of the present situation of higher education a scenario has been described in which the various development principles have been combined into a coherent whole. In doing so the contours can be outlined of a Dutch system of higher education as it might evolve over the medium term of approximately ten years. In order to bring out the interrelationships between the various elements in this third scenario, an overall picture is first of all provided below of the system of higher education as envisaged under this scenario. The various elements of the model are then discussed in more detail.

Figure 6.1 **A new system of higher education**



AIO = trainee research assistant

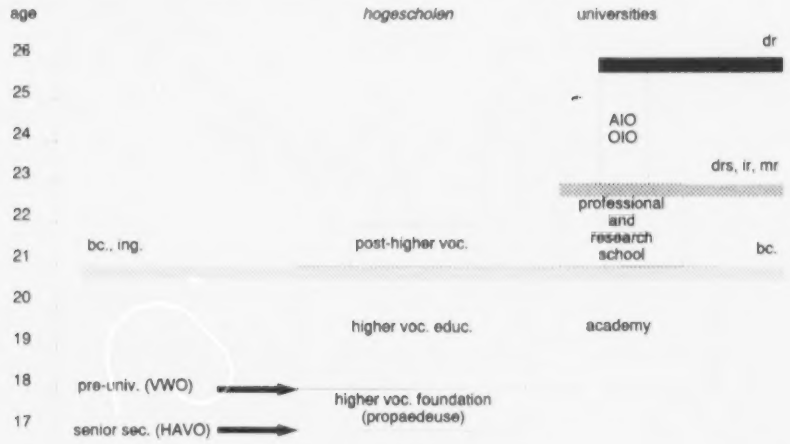
OIO = similar to AIO, but appointed by research bodies/centres other than universities.

Source: WRR.

The model pursues institutional differentiation and the breakdown of higher education objectives into stages. The differentiation relates first and foremost to the distinction between courses of education of a generalist or theoretical nature as against training courses primarily concerned with preparation for a vocation. This means that distinctions are drawn between 'academy' education (i.e. the first stage of university education) on the one hand and higher vocational education on the other. Academy education would provide a generalist follow-up to secondary education, while higher vocational education would provide a vocationally oriented follow-up, as is the case at present.

Within the present system of university education, this scenario would provide for a clear separation between an initial stage of academy education and a second stage of professional or academic vocational education on the one hand and scientific research training on the other. A characteristic feature of all second-stage courses would be that they presupposed a solid grounding at academic level.

Figure 6.2 **Titles in the new system of higher education**



AIO = trainee research assistant
OIO = similar to AIO, but appointed by research bodies/centres other than universities.

dr = Doctor (Ph.D.)
drs = doctorandus (equivalent to master's)
ir = ingenieur (equivalent to master's)
mr = meester (equivalent to master's)
bc = baccalaureus (equivalent to bachelor's)
ing = ingenieur, lower level (equivalent to bachelor's)

Source: WRR.

The hogeschool

Under this scenario little would change with regard to the diversity of higher vocational education. There is little reason to do so, since the link between theoretical instruction and practice within the system of higher vocational education ensures that the heterogeneity of the world of work can be closely monitored and matched.

The *hogeschool* would provide higher vocational training based on the general education achieved at the end of secondary school. The accent would be on the interaction between theory and practice. It might be possible to respond more effectively than at present to changes in the labour market and the resultant requirement for flexibility and mobility by means of more selective or convergent curriculum development. This would mean that students could be trained for various occupational areas at once, so that they could switch from one to the other more easily at a later stage of their careers, and could do so with less loss of time. Curriculum development along these lines would be reflected in the elimination of excessively narrow and overspecialised foundation courses. Instead, a limited number of intake profiles or foundation courses, followed by courses divided into majors and minors, could ensure greater flexibility. The *propaedeuse* or foundation course could then provide for selection, orientation and referral. The duration of study would be equal to the duration of the courses and to the period for which student grant and loans was available.

In the second year of the curriculum, the *hogescholen* have intake provision for pre-university education (VWO) graduates as well as university students who wish to transfer to higher vocational education after their foundation year. Conversely, it is possible for the system of higher education to refer students who have completed the *propaedeuse* examination to university education. It is also possible for higher vocational education graduates to apply for positions in university vocational education (or what is known as the professional school, see below), for example after several years of practical experience. The higher vocational education course would be completed with the same degree as at present, namely baccalaureus or *ingenieur* (engineer, equivalent to a bachelor's degree).

The academy

Under the WRR scenario the academy would form the first stage of university education. Here the education concentrates on the first of the university education objectives, namely that of cultivating transferable and academic skills. This would provide students with the possibility of familiarising themselves with the nature and history of academic inquiry, the scientific method, the scope for applying scientific knowledge and the place of scientific knowledge in society, and of acquiring the skills required to use this knowledge to best effect for both personal development and society as a whole.

At this stage of university education the curriculum would be constructed on a convergent basis, meaning that the academy could make do with a limited number of intake profiles, on the basis of which suitability for a particular major could then be assessed. The foundation course would also provide an opportunity for assessing whether the student was capable of enhancing his or her intellectual standard in a general sense. If not, referral to higher vocational education would suggest itself.

In order to permit serious selection and referral a certain degree of educational intensity would be required, under which the present average student/staff ratio in university education would need to be used to best effect. This would mean that consideration would need to be given to smaller-scale forms of education, particularly for the most popular courses and curricula. Only in these circumstances can the teaching staff provide students with customised support and is proper selection and referral possible.

Following the selection and referral of the foundation stage, the academy would not have courses of study in the present sense of the word; instead the study programmes would be subject to a number of guidelines or requirements. It might for example be laid down that half the course load should be devoted to a major subject of the student's choice, with preference for basic disciplines such as chemistry, biology, literature, history, psychology, economics or sociology/anthropology; a quarter of the course load would be devoted to areas not to do with the major subject and the remaining quarter to the acquisition of specialised skills, such as fluency in at least one modern language other than Dutch, leadership skills and presentation and literacy skills, etc.

Academies could differ from one another in terms of the basic disciplines taught, the major subjects on offer and the regulations governing the composition of the overall study package. Special majors could also be offered with a view to follow-up in the second stage where specialised preliminary training was required, such as packages preparing for courses in medicine, law or engineering.

The academy would lead to a *baccalaureus*, equivalent to a bachelor's degree. Given the convergent nature of the academy education and also the fact that the course could be completed with a specific form of occupational training, a course of three years would be appropriate. Once again the duration of studies would be equal to the student grant period and the funding duration. The selective preliminary stage of pre-university education combined with the selective *propaedeuse* on the basis of an intensive education strategy would make this possible.

The academy diploma would guarantee that the graduate was able to prepare for a particular profession or professional area on the basis of the academic foundation provided. The vocational preparation could occur in two ways: in practice and by following a suitable training course. A proportion of the graduates will be given trainee places in the private sector and will in this way be able to build up a career in which their academic skills will not only come into their own but obtain greater occupational relevance than was possible in the academy.
Increasingly, the private sector is providing the opportunity, by means of apprenticeship and trainee positions, to acquire the specific knowledge and experience required for operating in the organisations in question. Although the specialist knowledge acquired in the course of the training at the academy is important, this is often overshadowed by the importance attached to the typical academic skills relating to leadership and management qualities, presentation and thoroughness.

Another element of the graduates will, if so selected, gain access to the second stage of higher education. A small proportion of these will obtain further qualifications in science and scientific research at the research school, while another proportion - again on the basis of selection - will obtain qualifications in the various variants of the professional school for traditional and modern professions for which preliminary academic education is required. The possibility should also be explored for graduates to spend a final year at the *hogeschool* in order to obtain a specific occupational qualification at higher vocational (HBO) level.

The research school

The research school forms the second stage of university education and is concerned with preparation for science and scientific research. This is the stage of higher education at which - in the parlance of the current discussion - 'science with a capital S' is taught and carried out. Here too the linkage between instruction and research is vital.

Research schools are confined to universities; it is also possible for a number of universities to join together in a single research school. In many instances a research school will consist of a number of departments, each of which will need to seek accreditation from an independent, preferably international body once every five years.

The research school would select academy graduates on the basis of the type of preliminary education they had completed. University-level scientific research would also be carried out at the research schools. Graduates would be awarded a *doctoraal* diploma, or the equivalent of a master's degree (MA or MSc). Upon completion of the first stage with the academic diploma, the *doctoraal* element of the course would generally take two years. A proportion of the *doctoraal* graduates would then go on to take a Ph.D. as trainee research assistants, working on a dissertation under senior researchers for a period of three years.

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Upon leaving the research school graduates could go in one of two directions, after the *doctoraal* diploma. Students obtain this diploma on the basis of the customary course work, for which interim and final examinations need to be completed, as well as a demanding *doctoraal* paper. The quality of this paper and the potential for working it up into a dissertation are important factors in deciding whether graduates can proceed to the third stage as a trainee research assistant. In the latter capacity he or she would complete the dissertation under supervision. If a graduate student is not selected as a junior researcher or does not wish to go down this path, he or she would enter the labour market.

The professional school

The professional school would be primarily concerned with the preparation and training of graduate students for specific occupations in a complex, knowledge-intensive society. This means that the various training courses must remain in close touch with both the underlying scientific disciplines and with the practical field in question. The quality of the training courses would accordingly be judged in terms of the contribution made by graduates to the objectives of the professional sector in which they end up working.

The professional school is a form of vocational training that follows the academy stage; it is therefore academic vocational education. This means that a professional school is in principle attached to a university institute, although it would also be likely to cooperate closely with individual departments at various specialised polytechnics or *hogescholen*.

As in the case of research schools, access to professional schools would not be free. A first-stage diploma is a necessary but not sufficient precondition. Where they showed special suitability, graduates from related training courses in higher vocational education could also be admitted to the professional school, after going through the appropriate selection procedure.
Among other things students for the second stage are selected on the basis of their results at the first stage. This would include particular reference to the major, so that a package with education or English as the major could be converted into follow-up training in the teaching of that language. Apart from objective performance, other selection criteria relating to personal suitability could also play a role.

The length of study in a professional school would vary from one course to another. In certain cases intensive training of 12 or 18 months would be sufficient to obtain professional *doctoraal* standard; in other cases a two-year course would be required (e.g. continuing legal professional training as a barrister or magistrate) while medicine or engineering could take three years (completed respectively with a medical or university engineering diploma). Needless to say the first stage (of academy education) would already have covered a good deal of the ground in these areas.

Funding

As is the case at present, the government could fund the cost of education at *hogescholen* and academies as well as student grants. This would be on the basis that the length of funding would be equal to the course duration. Research schools would also be government-funded under the WRR's proposals, with student grants being disbursed by the institutions themselves. In the case of professional schools various sources of finance would be conceivable: government ministries (with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science possibly funding a minimum number of places), as well as contributions by professional organisations and private industry.

Conclusions

This report redefines the objectives of higher education in line with the changing social context. Five development principles have been formulated on the basis of the modified objectives. These principles have then been consistently worked out in the form of a scenario outlining a new system of higher education.

During the first stage of university education students with a pre-university education diploma would receive a training of three years at an academy. This kind of education should most definitely not be interpreted as a shorter version of the present four-year courses or as meaning that the same subject matter would need to be squeezed into a briefer period. This would be a different kind of education more concerned with development and socio-cultural training and which put a brake on the present trend towards superspecialisation. A three-year course at an academy concerned with an academic grounding based around the major subject in question would provide the student with a better preparation for the labour market than a more specialised research course lasting four years.

The *hogeschool* would continue to provide four-year vocational training courses for students who had completed senior education at secondary level and a three-year course for students with a pre-university education certificate. Both the academy and the *hogeschool* would lead to a *baccalaureus* or bachelor's degree, thereby improving the international comparability of higher education in the Netherlands. The problem under the present system is that courses of study of the same duration in higher vocational education and university education lead to a different level of degrees (namely bachelor and master respectively) and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to equate the Dutch university title with a master's degree in other countries.

Following the first stage, in which superior, more intensive education could be provided than at present, the majority of students would leave higher education. They could then acquire the necessary experience on the job. A select group of students would enter the second stage of higher education to prepare themselves for a career, such as research worker, engineer, doctor or lawyer. Selection for the second stage would be on the basis of the performance at the academy, if appropriate after a period of employment and practical experience.

The second stage would consist of a one, two or three year course concluding with a doctoraal diploma. This may be equated with a master's degree. It may be obtained at a research school where scientific researchers are trained or at a professional school where preparation is provided for an academic profession. A small proportion would then go on to do a Ph.D.

Each institution - i.e. *hogescholen*, academies, research schools or professional schools - would all have a curriculum-development committee. The composition of this committee would depend on the type of school and the relationship between the school and society, the economy and the world of scholarship. The curriculum-development committee would pay particular attention to the quality of education and to the finishing levels. First-year students would no longer get lost in the jungle of 600 generally small university and higher vocational degree courses. They would, instead, face a manageable structure, in which the first stage began with a broad curriculum in a limited number of disciplines, after which students could opt for a major and one or more minors.

Résumé en langue française

Récemment il y a eu de nombreuses discussions sur le chapitre de l'organisation et du financement de l'enseignement supérieur aux Pays-Bas. Le débat est du reste ouvert depuis beaucoup plus longtemps dans un cercle limité, parmi les intéressés, sur la qualité de cet enseignement. Il apparaît particulièrement difficile de définir ce qu'est un enseignement supérieur de qualité et quels devraient être son organisation et son mode de financement. Il semble sur ce point y avoir autant d'avis que de participants au débat. Cela s'explique assurément par le fait que chacun a sa propre expérience du système, mais surtout par le fait que les tâches et les fonctions de l'enseignement supérieur ne sont pas clairement définies.

En publiant ce rapport, le Conseil Scientifique pour la Politique Gouvernementale aux Pays-Bas, le WRR, entend ramener la discussion sur le fond du problème, à savoir les objectifs de l'enseignement supérieur, en se concentrant sur les deux grandes questions suivantes:
- comment adapter les objectifs de l'enseignement supérieur aux Pays-Bas, tels qu'ils sont définis par la loi, aux circonstances nouvelles pour qu'ils offrent une perspective clairement définie et attrayante aux établissements d'enseignement tout en constituant un cadre pour une organisation qui soit à la fois adéquate et efficace?
- sur la base de quels principes peut-on développer à terme, en partant du système actuel, une telle organisation adéquate et efficace de l'enseignement supérieur?

Contexte historique

Pour pouvoir répondre à ces deux questions, il faut, en un premier temps, analyser l'historique des objectifs fixés dans les lois, les règlements et les rapports du gouvernement. Le système néerlandais de l'enseignement supérieur comprend des universités et des établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur. Ces deux types d'établissements ont des origines totalement distinctes. Les universités se sont développées - pour nous limiter à l'époque moderne - à partir du modèle français de l'enseignement supérieur, destiné aux notables, à la classe cultivée. Au XIX^{e} siècle, l'université a évolué dans le sens d'une 'université de *Bildung*', alors sur le modèle allemand; l'idée qui sous-tend ce modèle est de former les étudiants en les mettant en contact avec la recherche scientifique. Ce principe, qui a été le principe directeur de l'université néerlandaise depuis la fin du XIX^{e} siècle, a dû être progressivement abandonné en raison de la forte croissance et de la spécialisation de la recherche scientifique, aussi bien dans l'enseignement supérieur qu'en dehors. L'écart entre la pointe de la recherche et la teneur beaucoup plus générale de l'enseignement supérieur n'a cessé de se creuser, créant ainsi un fossé entre les professions purement scientifiques et les professions axées sur la société. Il devint aussi de plus en plus difficile de donner aux étudiants, dont le nombre allait croissant, une formation scientifique spécialisée tout en les préparant à une carrière dans la vie active. C'est pour cette raison que de nombreuses suggestions ont été faites, surtout depuis la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, en vue d'adapter le système existant. Mais, en définitive, peu de choses ont changé en deux siècles.

Quant aux établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur, ils se sont développés pour faire face à la nécessité d'organiser des formations professionnelles pour les diplômés de plus en plus nombreux de l'enseignement secondaire général supérieur, et parce que le marché de l'emploi posait des exigences accrues. La vague de fusions dans le courant des années quatre-vingts a conduit à la constitution d'un petit nombre d'établissements de très

grande taille. Leur rapport aux universités est aujourd'hui controversé. La politique néerlandaise en matière d'enseignement supérieur a fréquemment changé sur ce point, si bien que la place des formations professionnelles au sein et en dehors de l'enseignement universitaire est tout aussi confuse aujourd'hui qu'elle ne l'était au début du XIX^{e} siècle.

Évolution de la société

Les exigences posées à l'enseignement supérieur ont profondément changé au cours des années, en raison du nombre croissant d'étudiants, des changements au niveau de la structure des professions et du marché de l'emploi, de l'internationalisation de l'économie et de la société et, enfin, de l'évolution des idées sur le rôle du secteur public.
La prospérité croissante s'est traduite par un afflux massif d'étudiants dans l'enseignement supérieur, ce qui posa de nouvelles exigences sur le plan tant quantitatif que qualitatif. Non seulement il fallait se préparer à accueillir un nombre plus grand d'étudiants, mais on se trouvait aussi confronté à une très grande hétérogénéité d'étudiants, ce qui rendait nécessaire une diversification plus grande des enseignements donnés. Or, cette diversification n'a pas été suffisamment concrétisée.

L'augmentation du nombre de diplômés et les nouvelles données de la structure économique et du marché de l'emploi ont fait apparaître, ces dernières années, qu'il est de moins en moins évident, pour les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur, d'accéder à une bonne situation sur le marché de l'emploi. On a donc commencé à douter de la nécessité d'engager des investissements considérables dans un enseignement supérieur de 'masse'. Le WRR pense que ces doutes ne sont pas fondés; il prend par ailleurs en compte les reproches concernant la surqualification et le déséquilibre entre les filières lettres et sciences humaines, d'une part, et les filières scientifiques et techniques, de l'autre. Mais, à supposer que ce soit effectivement le cas - et il faudrait nuancer les propos sur ce point -, cela procède avant tout de l'organisation du système aux Pays-Bas et du raccourcissement de la durée des études. Il ne s'agit certainement pas d'une conséquence inévitable d'une participation croissante à l'enseignement supérieur.

Aux défis du marché de l'emploi, les instituts d'enseignement aux Pays-Bas ont répondu par la création de formations de plus en plus axées sur des emplois et des fonctions spécifiques. Dans la pratique toutefois, les emplois et les fonctions correspondent de moins en moins à des formations spécifiques; de plus, ils se développent et changent à un rythme de plus en plus rapide. Pour suivre la dynamique du marché de l'emploi, les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur doivent disposer avant tout d'une certaine dose de mobilité intellectuelle. La pratique professionnelle exige un niveau scientifique de réflexion et de travail permettant de s'engager à chaque fois dans de nouvelles spécialisations. Il en va de même pour les formations de l'enseignement professionnel supérieur: en fin de compte, une spécialisation très poussée limite plutôt qu'elle n'augmente les possibilités sur le marché de l'emploi.

Ces développements dans la relation entre l'enseignement supérieur et le marché de l'emploi aux Pays-Bas se manifestent aussi dans les autres pays de l'Union européenne. De nombreux pays s'efforcent d'adapter l'enseignement supérieur aux exigences nouvelles. L'unification de l'Europe est un facteur qui influence considérablement l'enseignement supérieur néerlandais, surtout de façon indirecte, au travers de la libre circulation des services et des personnes. Il importe donc de veiller à ce que l'enseignement supérieur néerlandais soit compatible avec l'enseignement supérieur dans les autres pays d'Europe. Les pouvoirs publics, mais aussi et surtout les établissements eux-mêmes, doivent anticiper ces développements en accordant la priorité à l'identité et au pre-

stige, au niveau international, des résultats obtenus dans l'enseignement supérieur aux Pays-Bas.

Enfin, l'évaluation des conceptions sur la place et le rôle du secteur public pose des exigences nouvelles à l'organisation des établissements d'enseignement. L'organisation des établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur semble à cet égard plus moderne et davantage en prise sur la réalité que celle des universités. Au sein des universités, le monde universitaire se retrouve dans une situation où il est juge et partie, et ce en dépit du mouvement de démocratisation des années soixante et soixante-dix. D'où un certain immobilisme. La recherche constante de la qualité au sein du système exige non seulement suffisamment d'autonomie pour les professionels scientifiques, mais aussi des cadres bien définis et stables au sein desquels opérer. Cela signifie que ceux qui sont responsables de ces cadres ne doivent pas être les mêmes que ceux qui sont responsables de l'exécution. Cette philosophie, qui rencontre un succès croissant, a nécessairement des conséquences sur les rapports entre les pouvoirs publics et les instituts d'enseignement, d'une part, et sur les rapports au sein de ces instituts eux-mêmes, de l'autre.

Reformulation des objectifs

Le WRR a reformulé les objectifs de l'enseignement supérieur à partir des nouvelles exigences qui lui sont posées. Pour les établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur, on peut distinguer trois objectifs:

1. l'acquisition de connaissances théoriques relatives à un domaine donné;
2. l'apprentissage de l'application de ces connaissances dans une profession spécifique;
3. l'acquisition d'un niveau professionnel de réflexion et de travail grâce à la formation individuelle, sociale et générale.

Ces objectifs se situent dans le prolongement direct l'un de l'autre; ils peuvent être facilement réalisés dans le cadre de la structure existante. Le succès de l'enseignement professionnel supérieur s'explique en partie par l'adéquation de la structure de son organisation à ses objectifs. A cela s'ajoute que cet enseignement connaît un certain nombre de développements qui permettent aux établissements de satisfaire aux exigences nouvelles de la société, en particulier les tentatives faites pour donner à la phase propédeutique un caractère plus général et pour l'adapter aux filières du nouveau second cycle de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur. Il faudra en tout cas améliorer l'accès à l'enseignement professionnel supérieur à partir d'une amélioration de l'enseignement secondaire général supérieur, comme on n'a pas manqué de le souligner de diverses parts.

La reformulation des objectifs a davantage de conséquences pour les universités. Pour l'enseignement universitaire aux Pays-Bas, on peut fixer les objectifs suivants:

1. l'acquisition d'un niveau scientifique de réflexion et de travail dans l'optique d'une participation active à la société;
2. la préparation à des professions spécifiques requérant avant tout un niveau scientifique de réflexion et de travail;
3. la préparation à des professions scientifiques spécifiques telles que celles d'enseignant et de chercheur.

Ces objectifs semblent difficiles à réaliser simultanément au sein de la structure actuelle, dans une période relativement courte, pour une population nombreuse et hétérogène d'étudiants. C'est le premier objectif en particulier, celui de la formation scientifique générale, qui est menacé dans la structure actuelle de l'enseignement universitaire. Il est en outre difficile de satisfaire aux

deux autres objectifs avant que le premier ne soit réalisé. Le WRR estime donc que chaque objectif requiert une organisation différenciée, articulée en plusieurs phases bien distinctes.

Principes de développement

Reconnaître que l'organisation du système actuel d'enseignement supérieur aux Pays-Bas n'est plus adaptée, à divers égards, au contexte dans lequel il doit fonctionner, c'est admettre implicitement qu'un schéma trop détaillé de l'enseignement supérieur pour l'avenir entraînerait à nouveau des problèmes. Il conviendrait donc plutôt de procéder à des modifications progressives conduisant au bout de quelques années à l'émergence d'un système d'enseignement entièrement nouveau. C'est pour cette raison que les recommandations du WRR sont essentiellement axées sur les principes de rénovation du système induits par les considérations qui précèdent. Ces principes doivent être considérés comme un fil conducteur pour les nombreux petits aménagements nécessaires pour améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur. Le WRR en préconise cinq:

1. différenciation au niveau des établissements et introduction de plusieurs phases pour la réalisation des objectifs;
2. formation scientifique générale et professionnelle;
3. structure ciblée et convergente des programmes d'études;
4. intensification de l'enseignement;
5. fonctionnalisation des compétences.

L'application conséquente du premier principe conduit à lier les différents objectifs à différents types d'établissements. La première différenciation est celle entre universités et établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur, les premières ayant une mission scientifique et les secondes une mission orientée sur la formation professionnelle. Mais l'application de ce principe va plus loin. Pour l'enseignement universitaire, il conduit à une distinction plus marquée entre la phase de formation scientifique générale (à dispenser au niveau d'une 'académie'), la phase recherche (à dispenser au niveau d'un 'institut de recherche') et la phase professionnelle (à dispenser au niveau d'une 'école professionnelle'). L'acquisition d'un niveau scientifique de réflexion et de travail relève primairement de l'académie, la préparation à une carrière scientifique de l'institut de recherche et la préparation à une profession universitaire de l'école professionnelle. Ces deux derniers types d'écoles (instituts de recherche et écoles professionnelles) constituent la deuxième phase de l'enseignement universitaire, étant entendu que certaines écoles, comme 'l'école de médecine' et 'l'école de technologie' se situeraient au carrefour de ces deux filières.

Le WRR attire ensuite l'attention sur le deuxième principe, dont l'application conduit à une identification plus rigoureuse des tâches non seulement des différents instituts et écoles au sein de l'université, mais aussi de celles des établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur et de la première phase de l'enseignement universitaire, dispensée dans les académies. Le WRR estime que la composante scientifique de l'enseignement universitaire est menacée par la forte spécialisation consécutive à une orientation axée sur les professions et l'exercice de ces professions. Il accorde par conséquent une grande attention à la revalorisation de la formation scientifique comme faisant partie intégrante de l'enseignement universitaire.

L'application du troisième principe nécessite un élargissement considérable des filières, en particulier dans la première phase des études, aussi bien dans les établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur que dans les académies. La conséquence en est l'éclatement des filières actuelles, qui réapparaissent principalement dans la dernière partie de la première phase et dans

la deuxième phase des études. La première phase se caractérisera par un nombre limité de filières au niveau de l'entrée en propédeutique, l'étudiant poursuivant ensuite ses études dans une discipline principale et une ou plusieurs disciplines secondaires. Si divers établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur ont déjà pris des initiatives dans ce sens, celles-ci restent rares dans la première phase de l'enseignement universitaire. Dans la deuxième phase, aussi bien au niveau de l'institut de recherche qu'à celui de l'école professionnelle, les programmes seront axés de façon optimale sur la spécialité étudiée, la notion actuelle de filière retrouvant toute sa valeur.

Pour ce qui est du quatrième principe, l'intensification de l'enseignement, le WRR considère que, compte tenu des proportions totales d'étudiants et d'enseignants dans l'enseignement supérieur, l'accroissement considérable du nombre des étudiants au cours des dernières décennies ne doit pas être un obstacle à l'introduction de structures d'enseignement de dimensions plus réduites dans l'enseignement supérieur. C'est la seule façon de pouvoir procéder à des orientations et à des sélections sérieuses des étudiants. Cela doit aussi permettre d'éliminer le dilettantisme, qui existe encore chez les étudiants dans certains secteurs de l'enseignement universitaire.

L'application du cinquième principe, de nature administrative, invite à fonctionnaliser fortement les compétences au sein des établissements. Il s'agit de bien définir la fonction administrative au niveau des contenus (responsabilités en matière de choix de cursus et de programmes d'études), la fonction professionnelle (responsabilités en matière de développement des disciplines dans le cadre des différents cursus et programmes) et la fonction de gestion (responsabilités en matière de gestion de l'établissement). C'est surtout le rapport entre la première fonction, celle de l'organisation des cours, et la deuxième, celle de l'organisation professionnelle, qui sera concrétisé dans une perspective plus adaptée aux besoins et permettra de mieux préserver la qualité de l'enseignement et de la recherche. Le WRR juge que l'organisation administrative actuelle de l'enseignement supérieur ne permet pas une telle structure fonctionnalisée des compétences.

Le scénario proposé par le WRR

L'application et l'importance de ces cinq principes peuvent être illustrés par le système d'enseignement supérieur tel qu'il est appelé à se développer suivant le scénario du WRR, étant entendu que la réalisation pourra être différente dans la pratique. Le WRR entend proposer une base permettant de faire des choix clairs en ce qui concerne la définition de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur et de l'organisation de cet enseignement. Mais il n'est pas possible d'expliciter les principes proposés, qui sont au coeur des recommandations du WRR, sans les appliquer à un modèle d'organisation concret.

Le WRR propose donc de structurer l'enseignement supérieur de la façon suivante: la durée des études dans l'enseignement professionnel supérieur reste de quatre ans pour les diplômés de l'enseignement secondaire général supérieur, des dispositions étant prises pour que les diplômés de l'enseignement préuniversitaire puissent suivre le même cours en trois ans. Quant à l'enseignement universitaire, il comprendrait deux phases. Dans la première phase, l'académie offre aux étudiants diplômés de l'enseignement préuniversitaire une formation de trois ans axée sur une matière principale. Ce cours est sanctionné par le grade de *baccalaureus*, équivalent du grade anglo-saxon, internationalement reconnu, de *bachelor*. Le niveau obtenu à l'issue de cette formation doit donner accès soit à une carrière dans la vie professionnelle, soit à la deuxième phase de l'enseignement universitaire.

La formation offerte par les 'académies' est le pendant de celle dispensée dans l'enseignement professionnel supérieur et qui est sanctionnée par un diplôme de qualification professionnelle dans un domaine spécifique. Les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur sont censés, après l'obtention de leur titre de *baccalaureus* ou d'*ingenieur*, de se diriger vers le marché de l'emploi.

Différentes voies s'ouvrent aux diplômés à l'issue de la première phase. Ils peuvent quitter l'enseignement supérieur et poursuivre leur formation dans la vie professionnelle. C'est le choix le plus évident pour les diplômés de l'enseignement professionnel supérieur, mais aussi pour une partie de ceux qui ont achevé une formation universitaire à une académie. Si leurs résultats sont suffisamment bons, ces derniers peuvent accéder à la deuxième phase de l'enseignement universitaire: l'enseignement scientifique dans un 'institut de recherche' ou l'enseignement professionnel dans une 'école professionnelle'.

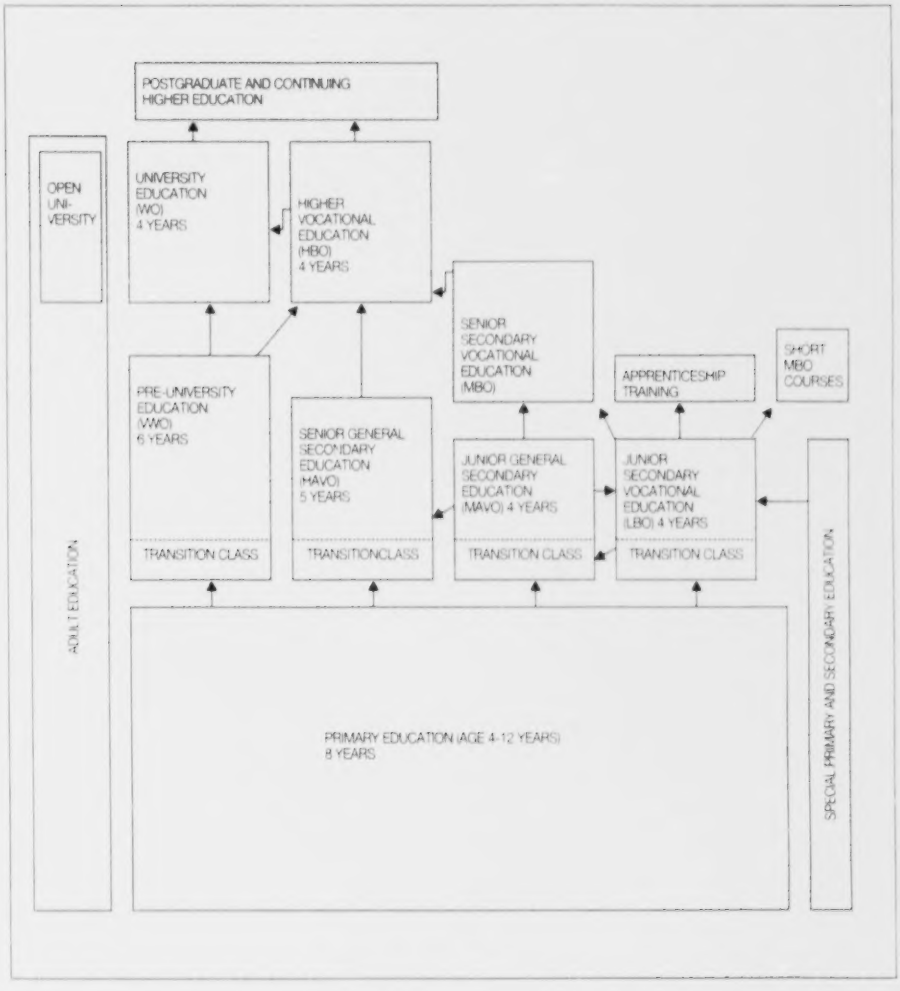
Il y aurait également lieu d'étudier la possibilité, pour ces étudiants, de suivre la dernière année de l'enseignement professionnel supérieur afin d'obtenir une qualification professionnelle spécifique. Le WRR ne donne qu'une indication approximative du nombre de diplômés des académies qui seraient admis a la deuxième phase: la moitié environ des étudiants qui s'inscrivent annuellement dans les académies devraient pouvoir s'engager dans la deuxième phase, soit directement, soit après un certain temps de travail.

Dans la deuxième phase de l'université (instituts de recherche ou écoles professionnelles), les programmes seraient axés de façon optimale sur la spécialité choisie. Dans l'espace de deux ans en moyenne, les étudiants pourraient acquérir une formation de haut niveau dans le domaine professionnel ou scientifique choisi. Ils auraient alors un des titres de *doctorandus*, d'*ingenieur* ou de *meester*, de niveau comparable au titre anglo-saxon internationalement reconnu de *master*. Un petit nombre d'entre eux pourraient avoir accès au troisième cycle (*doctorat*).

Ce scénario requiert un renforcement de l'enseignement et une nouvelle organisation des établissements d'enseignement supérieur. Les compétences doivent être fonctionnalisées au sein des établissements, des structures de gestion distinctes étant responsables de l'organisation et des finalités des programmes pour l'ensemble des étudiants. La composition personelle de ces structures de gestion peut varier selon le type d'établissement et selon son orientation sociale, économique ou scientifique. Le scénario du WRR comporte aussi des propositions concrètes quant à la structure financière. Les pouvoirs publics financeraient l'enseignement initial (établissements d'enseignement professionnel supérieur et académies), ainsi que les allocations d'études pour les étudiants de ces établissements. Les instituts de recherche seraient également financés par les pouvoirs publics, les étudiants pouvant obtenir des bourses par l'intermédiaire des établissements. Différentes sources de financement sont envisageables pour les écoles professionnelles: les ministères, parmi lesquels le ministère de l'Enseignement, de la Culture et des Sciences financerait éventuellement un nombre minimum de places, mais aussi des contributions des milieux professionnels et des entreprises, ainsi que des étudiants eux-mêmes. Les pouvoirs publics peuvent stimuler ces deux derniers modes de financement en mettant en place des incitants fiscaux.

Annex

Chart of existing Dutch education, from primary school up to and including higher education


POSTGRADUATE AND CONTINUING HIGHER EDUCATION
OPEN UNI-VERSITY
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (WO) 4 YEARS
HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (HBO) 4 YEARS
SENIOR SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (MBO)
APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING
SHORT MBO COURSES
PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (VWO) 6 YEARS
SENIOR GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (MAVO) 5 YEARS
JUNIOR GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (MAVO) 4 YEARS
JUNIOR SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (LBO) 4 YEARS
TRANSITION CLASS
TRANSITIONCLASS
TRANSITION CLASS
TRANSITION CLASS
ADULT EDUCATION
PRIMARY EDUCATION (AGE 4-12 YEARS) 8 YEARS
SPECIAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Council has published the following Reports to the Government

First term of office

1 Europese Unie (European Union), 1974.

2 Structuur van de Nederlandse economie (Structure of the Netherlands Economy), 1974.

3 Energiebeleid op langere termijn (Long-term Energy Policy), 1974. Reports 1 to 3 are published in one volume.

4 Milieubeleid (Environment Policy), 1974.

5 Bevolkingsprognoses (Population Forecasts), 1974.

6 De organisatie van het openbaar bestuur (The Organization of Public Administration), 1975.

7 Buitenlandse invloeden op Nederland: Internationale migratie (Foreign Influence on the Netherlands: International Migration), 1976.

8 Buitenlandse invloeden op Nederland: Beschikbaarheid van wetenschappelijke en technische kennis (Foreign Influcence on the Netherlands: Availability of Scientific and Technical Knowledge), 1976.

9 Commentaar op de Discussienota Sectorraden Wetenschapsbeleid (Comments on the discussion Paper on Sectoral Council of Science Policy), 1976.

10 Commentaar op de nota Contouren van een toekomstig onderwijsbestel (Comments on the White Paper on the Contours of the Future Education System), 1976.

11 Overzicht externe adviesorganen van de centrale overheid (Survey of External Advisory Bodies of the Central Government), 1976.

12 Externe adviesorganen van de centrale overheid, beschrijving, ontwikkelingen, aanbevelingen (External Advisory Bodies of the Central Government: Description, Developments, Recommendations), 1977.

13 'Maken wij er werk van?' Verkenningen omtrent de verhouding tussen actieven en niet-actieven ('Do we make Work our Business?' An Exploratory Study of the Relations between Economically Active and Inactive Persons), 1977.

14 Overzicht interne adviesorganen van de centrale overheid (Survey of Internal Advisory Bodies of the Central Government), 1977.

15 De komende vijfentwintig jaar, een toekomstverkenning voor Nederland (The Next Twenty-Five Years: a Survey of Future Developments in the Netherlands), 1977.

16 Over sociale ongelijkheid, een beleidsgerichte probleemverkenning (On Social Inequality: a Police-oriented Study), 1977.

Second term of office

17 Etnische minderheden – A. Rapport aan de Regering; B. Naar een algemeen etnisch minderhedenbeleid? (Ethnic minorities – A. Report to the Government; B. Towards on Overall Ethnic Minorities Policy?), 1979.

18 Plaats en toekomst van de Nederlandse industrie (Industry in the Netherlands: its Place and Future), 1980.

19 Beleidsgerichte toekomstverkenning: deel 1. Een poging tot uitlokking (A Policy-oriented Survey of the Future: Part 1. An Attempt to Challenge), 1980.

20 Democratie en geweld – Probleemanalyse naar aanleiding van de gebeurtenissen in Amsterdam op 30 april 1980 (Democracy and Violence – an Analysis of Problems in Connection with the Events in Amsterdam on April 30, 1980), 1980.

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21 Vernieuwing in het arbeidsbestel (Prospects for Reforming the Labour System), 1981.

22 Herwaardering van welzijnsbeleid (A Reappraisal of Welfare Policy), 1982.

23 Onder invloed van Duitsland. Een onderzoek naar gevoeligheid en kwetsbaarheid in de betrekkingen tussen Nederland en de Bondsrepubliek (The German Factor. A Survey of Sensitivity and Vulnerability in the Relationship between the Netherlands and the Federal Republic), 1982.

24 Samenhangend mediabeleid (A Coherent Media Policy), 1982.

Third term of office

25 Beleidsgerichte toekomstverkenning: deel 2: Een verruiming van perspectief (A Policy-oriented Survey of the Future: Part 2: Towards a Broader Perspective), 1983.

26 Waarborgen voor zekerheid; een nieuw stelsel van sociale zekerheid in hoofdlijnen (Safeguarding Social Security), 1985.

27 Basisvorming in het onderwijs (Basic Eduaction), 1986.

28 De onvoltooide Europese integratie (The Unfinished European Integration), 1986.

29 Ruimte voor groei (Scope for Growth), 1987.

30 Op maat van het midden- en kleinbedrijf (Tailoring Policy to the Needs of the Small and Medium-sized Business), 1987.

31 Cultuur zonder grenzen (Culture and Diplomacy), 1987.

32 De financiering van de Europese Gemeenschap (Financing the European Community), 1987.

33 Activerend arbeidsmarktbeleid (An Active Labour Market Policy), 1987.

34 Overheid en toekomstonderzoek (Government and Future Research), 1988.

Fourth term of office

35 Rechtshandhaving (Law Enforcement), 1989.

36 Allochtonenbeleid (Immigrant Policy), 1989.

37 Van de stad en de rand (Institutions and Cities; the Dutch Experience), 1990.

38 Een werkend perspectief (Work in Perspective), 1990.

39 Technologie en overheid (Technology and Policy), 1991.

40 De onderwijsverzorging in de toekomst (Educational Support in the Future), 1991.

41 Milieubeleid: strategie, instrumenten en handhaafbaarheid, (Environment Policy: Strategy, Instruments and Enforcement), 1992.

42 Grond voor keuzen; vier perspectieven voor de landelijke gebieden in de Europese Gemeenschap (Ground for Choices), 1992.

43 Ouderen voor Ouderen; demografische ontwikkelingen en beleid (Demographic Developments and Policy), 1993.

Fifth Term of office

44 Duurzame risico's: een blijvend gegeven (Sustained Risks: a Lasting Phenomenon), 1994.

45 Belang en beleid; naar een verantwoorde uitvoering van de werknemersverzekeringen (Interest and Policy: to a Responsible Implementation of Employee Insurances), 1994.

46 Besluiten over grote projecten (Decision-making on Complex Projects), 1994.

47 Hoger onderwijs in fasen (Higher Education in Stages), 1995.

Reports nos. 13, 15, 17, 18, 28, 31, 32 42 and 44 have been translated into English; English summaries are available of Reports nos. 16, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 37, 38, 41 and 47; Report no 23 has been translated into German. Of Report no. 42 a German and a Spanish Summary is available, as well as a full French translation.

36 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Council has published the following Preliminary and background studies (in Dutch)

First term of office

V1 W.A.W. van Walstijn, Kansen op onderwijs; een literatuurstudie over ongelijkheid in het Nederlandse onderwijs (Educational Opportunities: a Literature Study of Inequality in the Netherlands Educational System) (1975)

V2 I.J. Schoonenboom en H.M. In 't Veld-Langeveld, De emancipatie van de vrouw (Women's Emancipation) (1976)

V3 G.R. Muster, Van dubbeltjes en kwartjes, een literatuurstudie over ongelijkheid in de Nederlandse inkomstenverdeling (Dimes and Quarters: a Literature Study on Inequality in the Distribution of Income in the Netherlands) (1976)

V4 J.A.M. van Weezel a.o., De verdeling en de waardering van arbeid (The Distribution and Appreciation of Work) (1976)

V5 A.Ch.M. Rijnen a.o., Adviseren aan de overheid (Advising the Government) (1977)

V6 Verslag Eerste Raadsperiode 1972-1977 (Report on the First Term of Office) (1972-1977)*

Second term of office

V7 J.J.C. Voorhoeve, Internationale Macht en Interne Autonomie International Power and Internal Autonomy) (1978)

V8 W.M. de Jong, Techniek en wetenschap als basis voor industriele innovatie – Verslag van een reeks van interviews (Technology and Science as a base for Industrial Innovation) (1978)

V9 R. Gerritse, Instituut voor Onderzoek van Oveheidsuitgaven: De publieke sector: ontwikkeling en waardevorming – Een vooronderzoek (The Public Sector: Development and Valuation) (1979)

V10 Vakgroep Planning en Beleid/Sociologisch Instituut Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht: Konsumptieverandering in maatschappelijk perspectief (Shifts in Consumption in a Social Perspective) (1979)

V11 R. Penninx, Naar een algemeen etnisch minderhedenbeleid? Opgenomen in rapport nr. 17 (Towards an Overall Ethnic Minorities Policy? Attached to Report nr. 17) (1979)

V12 De quartaire sector – Maatschappelijke behoeften en werkgelegenheid – Verslag van een werkconferentie (The Quarternary Sector: Societal Requirements and Employment Opportunities) (1979)

V13 W. Driehuis en P.J. van den Noord, Produktie, werkgelegenheid en sectorstructuur in Nederland 1960-1985 (Output, Employment and the Structure of Production in the Netherlands, 1960-1985) Modelstudie bij het rapport Plaats en toekomst van de Nederlandse industrie (1980)

V14 S.K. Kuipers, J. Muysken, D.J. van den Berg en A.H. van Zon, Sectorstructuur en economische groei: een eenvoudig groeimodel met zes sectoren van de Nederlandse economie in de periode na de tweede wereldoorlog (The structure of Production and Economic Growth: a Simple Six-Sector Growth Model of the Dutch Economy in the Post-War Period) Modelstudie bij het rapport Plants en toekomst van de Nederlandse industrie (1980)

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